

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1 -- 13. (canceled)

1 14. (currently amended) An apparatus for aligning a
2 stack of flexible sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, some
3 of the sheets projecting laterally past one of the edges, the
4 apparatus comprising:

5 a stabilizing element shiftable horizontally toward and
6 away from the one edge of the substrate and having a face directed
7 toward the sheets;

8 a slip-preventing layer on the face; and

9 means for shifting the element horizontally toward the
10 stack and substrate for engaging the projecting sheets and pushing
11 same inward on the substrate to a position lying on or inward of
12 the outer edge without ~~vertically~~ downwardly bending or deflecting
13 the sheets.

1 15. (previously presented) The apparatus defined in
2 claim 14 wherein the layer is resilient.

1 16. (currently amended) The apparatus defined in claim
2 [[15]] 14 wherein the layer is made of an elastomer.

1 17. (currently amended) The apparatus defined in claim
2 [[15]] 14 wherein the element has an upper part and a lower part.

1 18. (previously presented) The apparatus defined in
2 claim 17 wherein the upper and lower part are joined together at a
3 nonplanar interface.

1 19. (currently amended) An apparatus for aligning a
2 stack of flexible sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, some
3 of the sheets projecting laterally past one of the edges, the
4 apparatus comprising:

5 a stabilizing element shiftable horizontally toward and
6 away from the one edge of the substrate;

7 a member on the element engageable under the stack; and
8 means for shifting the element horizontally toward the
9 stack and fitting the member under the projecting sheets to support
10 same while and pushing the projecting sheets inward on the
11 substrate to a position lying on or inward of the outer edge
12 without vertically downwardly bending or deflecting the sheets.

1 20. (previously presented) The apparatus defined in
2 claim 19 wherein the element has a horizontal surface portion
3 generally level with an upper surface of the substrate.

4 21. (currently amended) A method of aligning a stack of
5 flexible sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, some of the
6 sheets projecting laterally past one of the edges, the method
7 comprising the step of:

8 pressing a nonslip surface of a stabilizing element
9 against the laterally projecting sheets so as to push the laterally
10 projecting sheets in at least to the outer edge without downward
11 bending while pushing them in; and thereafter

12 pressing the stabilizing element against the other sheets
13 in the stack to align them on the substrate.

1 22. (previously presented) The method defined in claim
2 21, further comprising the step before pressing the stabilizing
3 element against the laterally projecting sheets of:

4 aligning the substrate relative to the stabilizing
5 element.

1 23. (previously presented) The method defined in claim
2 21, further comprising the step of

3 reducing friction between a lowermost sheet of the stack
4 and a support surface of the substrate on which it rests.

1 24. (previously presented) The method defined in claim
2 23 wherein friction is reduced by providing a low-friction foil
3 between the lowermost sheet and the upper surface.

1 25. (previously presented) The method defined in claim
2 23 wherein friction is reduced by coating the upper surface with a
3 lubricant.

1 26. (currently amended) A method of aligning a stack of
2 flexible sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, some of the
3 sheets projecting laterally past one of the edges, the method
4 comprising the step of:

5 engaging a support surface of a stabilizing element
6 underneath the laterally projecting sheets and pushing the
7 stabilizing and the laterally projecting sheets in at least to the
8 outer edge without downwardly bending the laterally projecting
9 sheets; and thereafter

10 pressing the stabilizing element against the other sheets
11 in the stack to align them on the substrate.